

# Ham radio operators homeless

## New city hall doesn't include space for amateur radio club

By Pat Pankratz

Staff Writer

**MANITOWOC** — Ham radio operators will need another home when Manitowoc builds a new city hall.

Amateur radio enthusiasts for many years have been meeting monthly in an otherwise unused portion of the basement at the current city hall at 817 Franklin St., for a token fee of \$1 per year.

The area contains ham radio equipment, tables and chairs and a side room for trade magazines.

"It's a fair-sized space," said Mancorad Amateur Radio Club president Fred Neuenfeldt.

Plans for the new city hall don't provide space for the club, he said.

City officials say the new building is being designed to use space far more efficiently than the current city hall, leaving the radio club without a home for now.

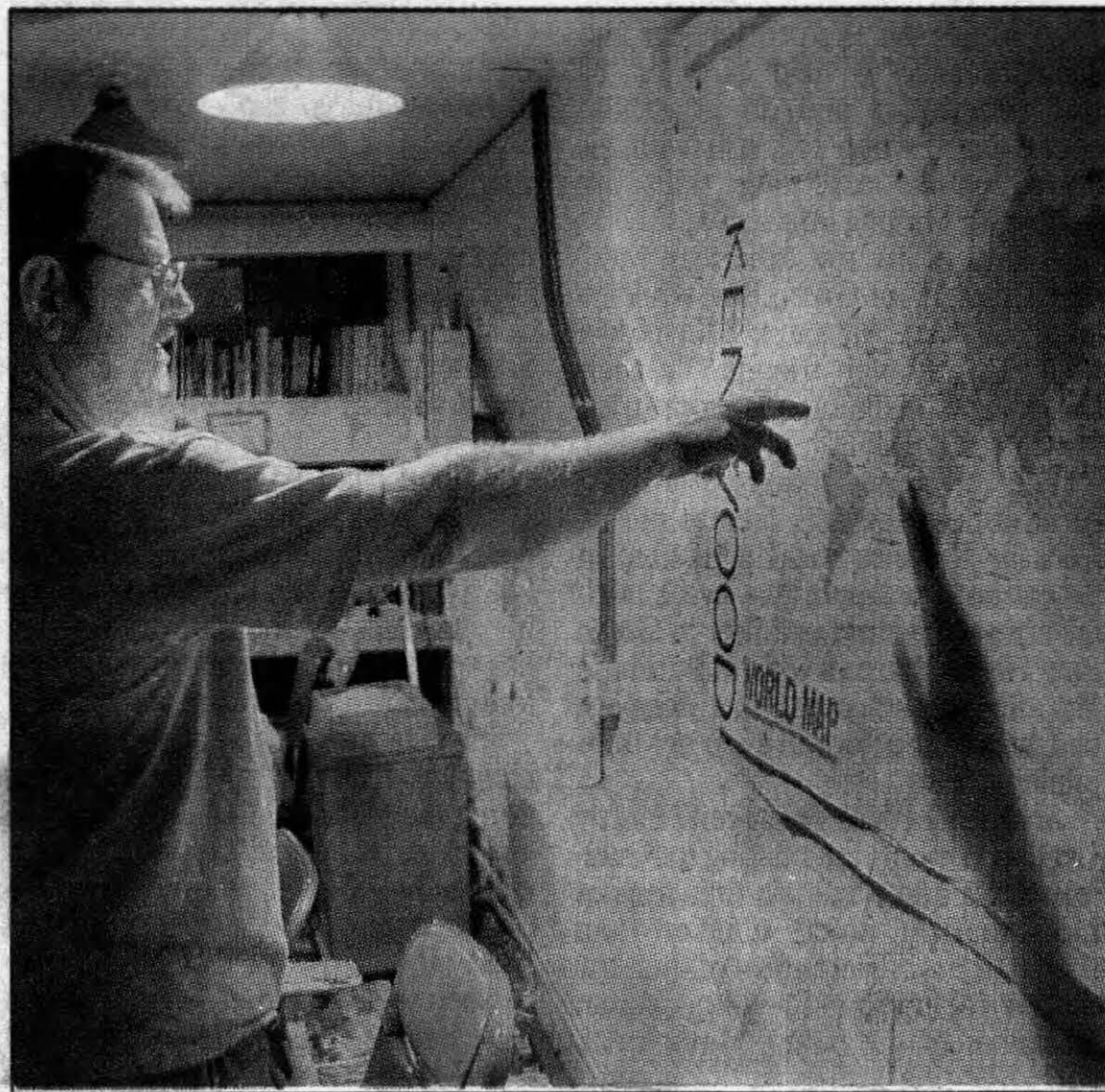
There have been two suggestions proffered by city and radio club officials:

- The former sexton house at Evergreen Cemetery; and
- The area purchased by the city for a new fire station at Waldo Boulevard and Fleetwood Drive.

The sexton house was most recently the home of the Manitowoc County Historical Society, and offers the advantage to radio operators of being located atop a hill, which Neuenfeldt says can enhance reception and transmission.

The sexton house needs repairs, however, and there has been talk of selling or razing the facility.

Neuenfeldt said there could also be a security problem if



HTR photo by Matt Marton

**Fred Neuenfeldt**, president of the Mancorad Amateur Radio Club of Manitowoc County, describes how the ham radio call signs indicate locations of the operators on a map of the world. The group meets in the basement of city hall, but no space has been allocated for them in plans for the new city hall.

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radio equipment is stored at the sexton house, which is relatively isolated.

Neuenfeldt said he hasn't seen the Waldo Boulevard facility yet and is awaiting word from city officials on a tour.

He would like to see the club continue because it can provide some valuable services. Once a year ham operators set up shop aboard the submarine U.S.S. Cobia to broadcast around the world, as part of submarine memorial services.

The club also monitors bike-a-thons by putting spotters out and offering communications.

"There really is a lot more we'd

like to become involved in that the city isn't using us for, like parades, walk-a-thons, bike races, things like that," Neuenfeldt said. "We'd basically provide communications services for anyone that needs it."

The club also works with county emergency government director Nancy Crowley, particularly in nuclear preparedness drills conducted periodically.

"I'm confident in talking with Mayor (Kevin) Crawford that we'll be able to work something out," Neuenfeldt said.

Those interested in ham radio operations can call Neuenfeldt at 682-9312.